Middle-aged tourists visiting India

4274. DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether incredible India is fast becoming a preferred destination for middle-aged tourists;

(b) whether the latest statistics prepared by the Ministry states that travellers aged 45 and above constitute 41 per cent of the total tourists visiting the country;

(c) whether the number of younger foreign tourists declined by 10 per cent during the last 10 years;

(d) if so, whether due to incidence of rape and murdering of young foreign tourists are the reasons for decrease in young tourists; and

(e) if so, what are concrete measures and steps Government proposes to take to help and assist foreign tourists and also provide safety to them?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF TOURISM (SHRIMATI KANTI' SINGH): (a) and (b) The Foreign Tourists Arrivals (FTAs) in India, including those pertaining to the middle-aged (45 years and above) tourists, has been increasing in the recent years. The FTAs for tourists aged 45 years and above constituted about 41% of the total FTAs in India in 2006 as compared to about 30% in 1996.

(c) to (e) The FTAs in India for tourists aged below 45 years increased from 1.61 million in 1996 to 2.63 million in 2006, registering a growth of about 63%.

'Public Order' and 'Police' are State subjects as per the Seventh Schedule of the Constitution of India, and the prevention of crime, including crimes against tourists, is the responsibility of State Governments/Union Territories.The Ministry of Tourism, therefore, asked State Governments and Union Territories to deploy tourist police at places frequented by tourists and ten States have already deployed tourist police at important tourist destinations. In a recent meeting with Secretaries of Tourism of States and Union Territories, it was emphasized that the safety and security of tourists is of paramount importance and State Governments/ Union Territories must ensure the same.

Industry status for tourism sector

4275. SHRI AMIR ALAM KHAN: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether tourism has been accorded the industry status;

(b) if so, whether Government has plans to boost-up the development of tourism industry by providing incentives; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM (SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI): (a) to (c) The Ministry of Commerce and Industry (Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion) have announced packages for the .States of Jammu & Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh and Uttaranchal for certain identified thrust industries, including Eco-Tourism industries set up in these States. Thereafter the Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion has announced the North East Industrial and Investment Promotion Policy (NE1IPP), 2007 under which capital investment subsidy

is available for various Industrial and Service Sector activities including hotels, adventure, leisure sports and ropeways in the North Eastern States including Sikkim.

Wine Tourism in Karnataka and Maharashtra

4276. SHRIDHARAM PAL SABHARWAL: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is aware that some section of industrialists are promoting Wine Tourism in the States of Karnataka and Maharashtra without the approval of the Central Government.

(b) if so, the details in this regard; and

(c) the action taken by Government for such a move harming the basic culture of our society?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM (SHRIMATIAMBIKA SONI): (a) to (c) Governments of Karnataka and Maharashtra are not promoting wine tourism in their respective States. However, as per information received from the Government of Maharashtra, wineries in the State of Maharashtra invite people to see the process of making wine.

Scheme for Rural Tourism

4277. SHRI SHANTARAM LAXMAN NAIK: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether the scheme of Rural Tourism is implemented in Goa;

(b) if so, the essential features of the scheme;

(c) the financial assistance, if any given to Goa since the commencement of the scheme;

(d) the activities carried out under the scheme in the State;

(e) whether there are success stories of the scheme in other States; and

(f) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM (SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI): (a) and (b) Ministry of Tourism provides Central Financial Assistance to the State Governments/Union Territories including Goa for infrastructure development in rural sites under the Scheme of Product/ Infrastructure Development for Destinations and Circuits. Activities pertaining to community participation and capacity building including skill upgradation in such rural sites are being supported through Government of India - United Nation's Development Programme Endogenous Tourism Project and the Capacity Building for Service Providers Scheme of the Ministry.

The objective is to showcase rural life, art, culture and heritage at rural locations and in villages, which have core-competencies such as culture, craft, handlooms and textile.

(c) and (d) Ministry of Tourism has not received any proposal from Government of Gc to be sanctioned under Rural Tourism scheme.

(e) and (f) Both domestic and international tourists have already started visiting ru a) tourism sites. Artisans from several rural tourism sites have showcased their products through